

Fairfax County Community Action Advisory Board (CAAB)
Meeting Minutes – Tuesday, January 2, 2024, 7:30pm
Fairfax County Government Center Rooms 9 & 10

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 pm by Chair Michelle Jefferson.

Members in Attendance: Nermin AbdelWahab, Sandra Barksdale, April Hall, Caroline Hockenberry, Michelle “Cookie” Hymer Blitz, Morgan Jameson, Michelle Jefferson, Maria Isabel Leiva, Michael Mahrer, Marcia McDevitt, Michele Menapace, Phil Rosenthal, Benjamin Zuhl

Remote Participants: Ken McMillon; Dranesville, Heather Thomas, Centreville, VA, Shari Zamarra, Fairfax, VA

Absent: Matthew Bell, Alicia Doe, Mary Ann Floto, Hawa Hassan, Ann Macpherson, Whitney Richardson, Alex Rodriguez, Hari Kurup, Alice Yam

Minutes- December 2023

The motion to approve the meeting minutes was made by Michael Mahrer, seconded by Phil Rosenthal. Passed with correction- Food for Others needs help with recycling their cardboard boxes.

Funding Priorities

The CAAB members discussed the process for funding priorities. Information was provided to newer members of the CAAB about how this phase of the process impacts the work and the direction of the CAAB in the long run. The CAAB ranks the funding priorities to help determine what percentage of Community Service Block Grants (CSBG) will go to non-profit organizations. The CAAB took a vote on the funding priorities. Housing remains the number one priority.

Fairfax County General Assembly Delegation’s Pre-2024 Session Public Hearing

The Fairfax County delegation to the General Assembly will hold a public hearing on Saturday, January 6th. Michelle Jefferson, Maria Isabel Leiva, and Nermin AbdelWahab will be testifying on behalf of the CAAB. Michelle Jefferson will speak on housing, food insecurity and transportation. Nermin Abdelwahab will speak on housing, and Maria Isabel Leiva will speak on childcare.

Membership and Election Committee Report

Shari Zamara presented a slate of CAAB officers for 2024. Michelle Jefferson for Chair, Heather Thomas for Vice Chair, and Morgan Jameson for Secretary. There are members who are up for renewal in February, and two available seats on the CAAB.

CCFAC Update:

The December meeting included a review of the recommendations from the Working Advisory Group (WAG) which reviews proposals and their status within the county for the expenditure of federal housing funds. The next CCFAC meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 9 where the recommendations from the WAG will be voted on. The comprehensive annual plan that CCFAC had a hearing on in October incorporated all the comments from the public into a draft. The annual plan will go to the board of supervisors for a public hearing.

CAAB Member Sharing

Michelle Menapace gave an update on the Human Services Council. The Human Services Council invited heads of various boards, authorities, and commissions (BACs) to hear a presentation from Michelle Gregory on the new interactive dashboard that was created to allow the public to see what is going on with human services in and around the county. There will be a summit on March 2nd on creating and sustaining collaboration amongst various BACs and non-profit organizations to meet the needs of the community. The dashboard shows in real time where the needs are, different areas of accountability, where the greatest gaps are, and which types of services are available.

Phil Rosenthal mentioned that there was a toy give away on December 11th and they provided 3,000-4,000 toys to children. This was in partnership with the Firefighters.

Marcia McDevitt reported on Reston Strong. There were 115 clients the other week at a food distribution. They also take food and clothing to 40-50 people in tents and link them to services.

Shari Zamara requested additional information for the hypothermia program.

Michelle "Cookie" Hymer Blitz said the hypothermia program is open until March 31st. There are a few shelters in the faith community.

Michael Mahrer informed the CAAB members that the English Empowerment Center has opened registration for next semester, beginning in February.

Michelle Jefferson mentioned the CAAB is working with Channel 16 to create an onboarding video for new members.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05pm. Moved by Phil Rosenthal, seconded by Michelle "Cookie" Hymer-Blitz.